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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 5264th meeting of the Security Council, held on 20 September 2005, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The role of civil society in conflict prevention and the pacific settlement of disputes", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"Recognizing the complex nature of threats to international peace and security, the Security Council underlined the need for a broad strategy for conflict prevention and pacific settlement of disputes in line with Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.

"The Security Council stressed that the essential responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national governments, and that the United Nations and the international community can play an important role in support of national efforts for conflict prevention and can assist in building national capacity in this field and recognized the important supporting role of civil society.

"The Security Council reaffirmed the need for this strategy to be based on engagement with governments, regional and subregional organizations as well as civil society organizations, as appropriate, reflecting the widest possible range of opinions.

"The Security Council underlined the potential contributions of a vibrant and diverse civil society in conflict prevention, as well as in the peaceful settlement of disputes. They noted that a well-functioning civil society has the advantage of specialized knowledge, capabilities, experience, links with key constituencies, influence and resources, which can assist parties in conflict to achieve peaceful solution to disputes.

"The Security Council noted that a vigorous and inclusive civil society could provide community leadership, help shape public opinion, and facilitate as well as contribute to reconciliation between conflicting communities. The Security Council also underscored the role that these actors could play in providing a bridge to dialogue and other confidence-building measures between parties in conflict.

"The Security Council underscored and will strengthen its relationship with civil society, including as appropriate, through, inter alia, the use of "Arria-formula" meetings and meetings with local civil society organizations during Security Council missions.

"The Security Council agreed to keep this item under review."

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